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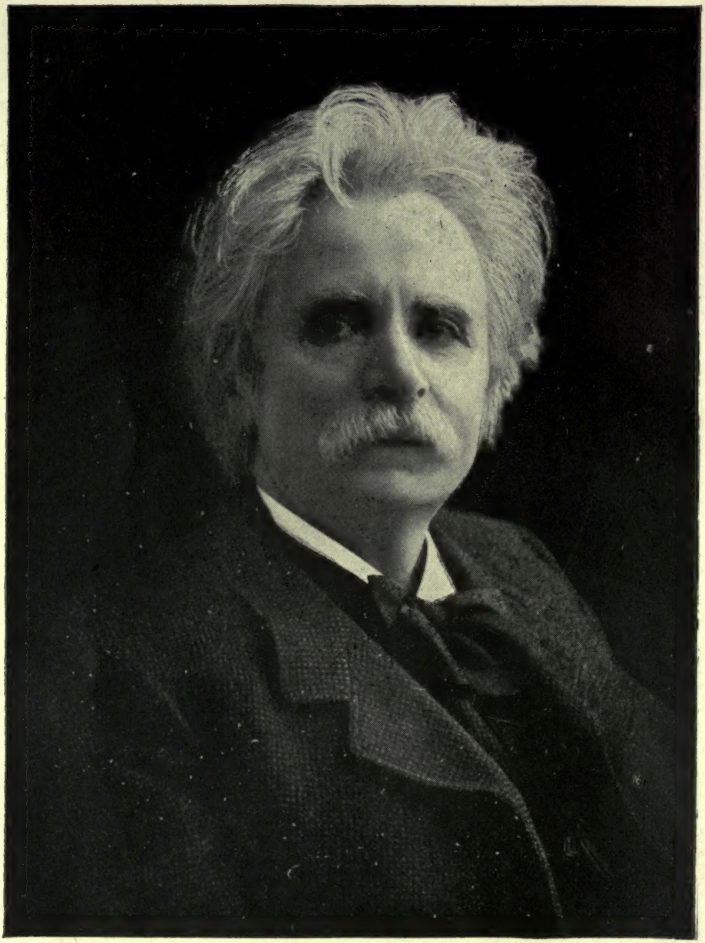

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Edvard Grieg.

Bell's Miniature Series of Musicians

GRIEG

BY

E. MARKHAM LEE

M.A., MUS.D. CANTAB.

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PREFATORY NOTE

I AM indebted to Mr. Percy Grainger for personal reminiscences, and for the kind loan of the letter, a portion of which appears on page viii; and to Miss Hildegard Werner for help in securing the illustrations, some of which, it is believed, have not before been made public.

E. MARKHAM LEE.

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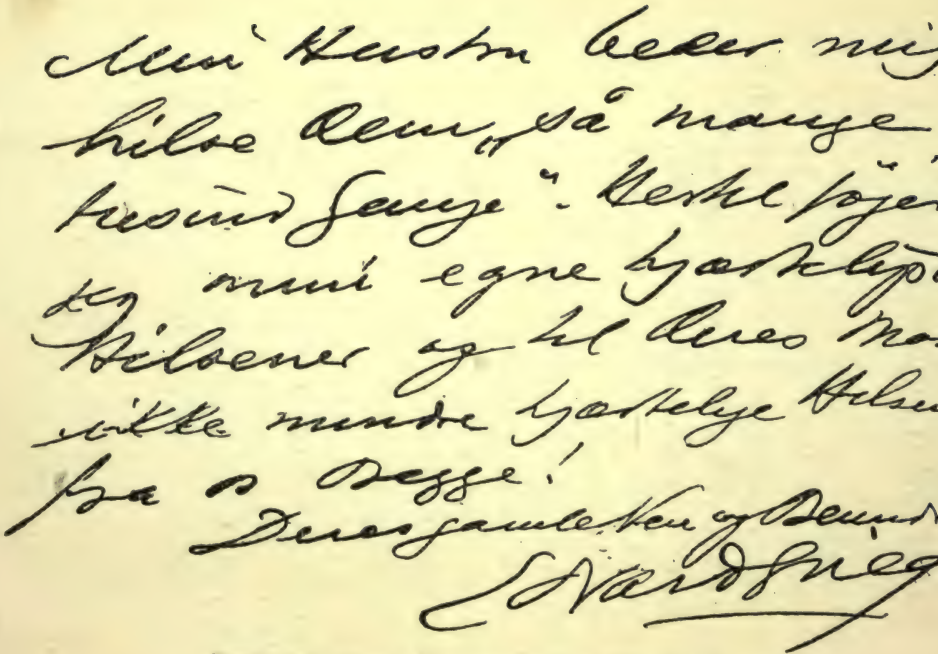


EXTRACT FROM A LETTER TO MR. PERCY GRAINGER.

Translation.—My wife bids me greet you "so many thousand times," to which I add my own heartiest greetings, and to your mother no less hearty greetings from us both!

Your old friend and admirer, E. G.

GRIEG

INTRODUCTORY

UP to the present only a limited number of European nations have produced tone-poets who have spoken with the unerring conviction of inborn instinct in the idiom of their native land. The youngest of the arts, Music, when it emerged from the amorphous, though very beautiful, position which it held as hand-maid to religion on the one hand, or its more shapely, but still crude, use as accompaniment to the song or dance on the other, found its domicile in Italy and Germany. Putting aside the glorious contrapuntal and polyphonic schools of the Netherlands, which had their influence upon our own country, as being the medium of expression of a by-gone age, music (and by that is meant modern music) passed its adolescence and vigorous manhood in Germany, served by such sons as Bach, Beethoven, and the whole line of wondrous German composers.

Where this mighty army of giants had passed along its way, myrmidons innumerable followed. The majority clave so steadfastly to the old track that for a time it appeared that German influence would be all-absorbing. But there were bolder spirits who, at first encouraged by the Romance leaders amongst the Germans themselves, diverged into glorious by-ways before untrodden, and therein found great treasure. Most successful amongst these were the musicians who sought their inspiration at home in their own lands. National composers there have been in great number, but quite a small proportion of these have become international in their reputation, and in the hold that they have had upon the hearts and affections of hearers all the world over.

The fact that a composer may appeal to the sympathies of his fellow-countrymen does not necessarily imply that he has a mission for the world at large. Glinka, for example, was intensely national, but his influence outside of Russia is small enough. Up to the present, beyond the great masters that are for all men, if not for all time, there have been few great enough to seize upon the national idiom and to translate it into terms comprehensible to those

for whom that idiom has no meaning. And herein lies the greatness of Grieg, who, more even than Tchaikovski for Russia, or Dvorák for Bohemia, has implanted upon the melodies and dances of Norway his own impress of genius, so that through him we have grown to love and to delight in a new world of music, vivid, picturesque, and entrancing.

The day may come, perhaps, when some one arising in our midst will do the same for England. National melodies we have of the most distinctive order, especially if those of the sister isle be included, and constant attempts are being made. But this is not enough. The man to succeed will be he who has the necessary qualities in himself to individualize the material waiting for his hand, and who will bring to it as much as it can present to him. It was this mating of equal forces which raised Grieg to a lofty position amongst tone-poets. He did not merely, as has been sometimes supposed, take the sad and sombre songs or the lively dances of the North, and present them to civilization in exquisitely delicate form. Quite the largest part of his work is original, although influenced by the style which he set himself to develop and copy.

What it really amounts to is this: Grieg studied at Leipsic, composed at first in the style of the German school, and although successful, pursued that style but a little way. He strode out into his own fertile by-way, leaving the broad main valley for the rocky, narrow, glacier-hemmed region which he explored for the first time, bringing to light unheard-of flowers, and discovering the most refreshing of tiny rills and delicate shoots.

To turn from metaphor, it is in the small forms that Grieg was at his best. It was not for him to grapple with Titanic forces as did Beethoven or Brahms, to work out subtle psychological problems like Schumann and Strauss, or to trace the sources of passion, love, and despair to the very springs as did Wagner, and to some extent Tchaikovski. His lines fell in easier places, to paint the sunrise, to gaze upon the tiniest petals of beautiful flowers, to sing with the joyous bird, and to murmur sweet sounds with the evening wind in the trees. All that is delicate, exquisite, tender, can be found in his music, while here and there a touch of wild barbarity, the shout of the old Viking warrior, makes itself felt. Passion there is too, if never very deep or very fierce; it is emotional

rather than fundamental. But one seldom meets the heroic in Grieg; he could not have written an Eroica symphony, nor could he depict a "Brunnhilde" or a "Zarathustra."

For this reason I doubt Grieg's place amongst the immortals. His claim is met too suddenly, and his genius is too readily perceived. There is none of that patient study requisite that rewards the persistence of the follower of Bach or of Brahms; of course it is not contended that the beauties of Grieg's music lie all on the surface, but they are scattered so thickly there that no one averse to diving beneath need do so, although his satisfaction would be greater were the attempt made. The main part of Grieg's popularity among amateurs is due to this immediate perception of the attractive in his music, and his exquisite miniatures are indeed worthy of every tribute of admiration. It is only when the mind demands greater things that it is to some extent dissatisfied, and herein lies the difference between Grieg who excelled in small forms and such composers as Bach, Beethoven, and others who set the seal of their genius on works of every stamp, from the tiniest instrumental piece to the mass, symphony, or string quartette.

We have then in Grieg an artist of consummate power in the miniature. He wrote works of greater calibre, but they are not numbered amongst his more fascinating compositions. And thus there are some lovers of music to whom he makes little appeal. To the man to whom opera appears the most glorious of all musical forms, Grieg has nothing to say: to him whose delight is in the symphony, or its more modern counterpart, the tone-poem for orchestra, little can be offered, for when Grieg wrote for the orchestra he painted his colours in the most fragile of tints, rather than with the flame-coloured vividness which the lover of present-day orchestral work likes and looks for. If that rarer taste, the love of chamber music, has to be considered, Grieg again (like Chopin), can put forward but little to justify his claim, while the devotees of sacred music whose fancy is for the glorious rolling organ fugue, or the deeply spiritual mass, have to go away unsatisfied.

Grieg, however, is strong in his appeal in quarters where appeals are most readily met. The short pianoforte piece, the love-song or the national air, the rustic dance—of these there are plenty. It is a somewhat slender list of com-

positions that comprises his life-work, slender in calibre rather than in amount or quality: like the man himself, gentle, tender, frail. Whether such qualities are sufficient to hand his name down to posterity as a genius for future ages to revere is doubtful. But we must remember that Chopin also appeals, strictly speaking, to a limited class albeit a large one, those who love to listen to, or to play, music for the pianoforte; and yet Chopin is everywhere recognized as a true genius, whose frail conceptions have an imperishable beauty. So it may be with Grieg, who opened up a new world of thought: all praise to him for his melodic freshness, his harmonic power, and his rare ability to engraft a really individual style upon the material offered, or suggested, by his country's songs and dances.

EARLY LIFE AND STUDENT DAYS

NOT only in his music was Grieg an ardent nationalist, he was heart and soul devoted to Norway, his country: he even objected to being defined as a Scandinavian musician; a son of Norway, he held allegiance to that land and that alone. Hence his delight at the separation from Sweden which took place towards the end of his life. Nevertheless there was a trace of Scotch blood in his veins, for his great-grandfather was a native of Aberdeen, and fled from Scotland in the troublous times of the Pretender, settling in Norway in 1745, and making a home in Bergen.

This ancestor was named Alexander Greig, and it was he who changed the spelling of the name from the Scotch to the now more familiar form. Both he, and his son, and his grandson after him, married into Norwegian families, and therefore the composer had only a trace of the Scot in him. The second Alexander Grieg, a grandson of the original settler, was British

GRIEG AT THE AGE OF SIXTEEN

Consul at Bergen, and there married Gesine Judith Hagerup, who had studied music with much success in Hamburg and in London. So advanced was she as a pianist that she performed in concerts in the Norwegian seaport where she and her husband made their home, and her influence upon the subject of our notice was quite considerable. Of the three daughters and two sons born to this pair, the musical talent of the mother seems to have descended almost entirely to Edvard Hagerup, her elder son: the younger, John, confined his musical activities to performances upon the violoncello, and followed his father's lead as a merchant.

It was on June 15th, 1843, that the greatest representative of Norwegian music was born, and in early days we read of him sitting at the piano, struggling with tiny hands to spell out chords. When he was six years of age his talented mother commenced his training, little knowing of the genius in embryo whose future she had to mould. But the moulding was well done, not merely by the lessons, but by the influences of cultured friends and musical surroundings which characterized the home life from the start.

Grieg's school-days, like those of Tchaikovsky

and others whose ardent artistic leanings resent the trammels of routine and discipline, were by no means a period of unmixed delight. Instead of home-work he was more prone to make attempts at composition; already, when he was about twelve, he had composed what he grandiloquently termed "Variations on a German melody for the Piano. Opus 1." His schoolmaster, happening to pounce upon it, advised him not to bring such rubbish to school. This was hardly encouraging, and we can understand the various devices which he practised to absent himself as much as possible. Finding by experience that if he turned up in wet clothes he was sent home, he made a habit of very frequently appearing in an extremely damp condition. When, however, this little trick was tried on perfectly dry days the schoolmaster waxed suspicious, and the result was trouble. Grieg afterwards said of his school-life: "It was in the last degree unsympathetic to me. . . . I have not the least doubt that that school developed in me nothing but what was evil, and left the good untouched."

No serious idea of embarking upon music as a profession seems to have occurred to Grieg (whose early leanings were towards the church

and the art of painting) until the never-to-be-forgotten day which stood as a landmark in his life. When he was about fifteen his parents were visited by Ole Bull, the most famous violinist that Norway has, perhaps, ever produced. Bull was a fascinating man, at that time nearly fifty years of age, who had led a Bohemian life, touring the world and performing mad freaks such as playing his fiddle on the top of the Great Pyramid, and throwing himself and his instrument into the river when in danger of a vessel catching fire. He had visited America several times, once with Adelina Patti, and had a fine technical equipment, which aroused his audiences to enthusiasm.

We can imagine the influence such a visitor to the house would have upon the impressionable youth, and when Ole Bull took an interest in the boy's compositions, made him play them at the pianoforte, and finally advised the parents to send him to the Leipsic Conservatoire, the die was cast, and henceforward music became the object of his life. So, in due course, he found himself at Leipsic, thrown at the age of fifteen amongst hundreds of other students, all aiming at the same goal. It is in such places as these that individuality either shapes towards a

high level, or is subordinated altogether. The latter seemed to be Grieg's position at first, for, compared with other brilliant boys there at the same time (Arthur Sullivan, Franklin Taylor, Edward Dannreuther, and many another) he did little either as a pianist or as a composer. At first he did not feel his feet, and his pianoforte studies, under that somewhat pedantic maestro, Plaidy, or essays in harmony with pedagogue E. F. Richter, do not appear to have risen greatly above the average.

Under the influence of Hauptmann and Reinecke, and with an increasing conviction that hard labour must take the place of the desultory lack of method which he at first adopted, he began to make great strides. But his new-found enthusiasm carried him to excess, and he overworked to such an extent that he brought on lung trouble, resulting in a serious illness, and leaving him for the rest of his life with but one lung to breathe with. This accounts for much of his subsequent fragility and impaired health.

A holiday at Bergen set him straight once more, and on his return he worked steadily and well, passing in 1862 the final examination with credit. Little trace of any individuality is to be

found in his work so far, for he developed slowly, and had not yet found his *métier*. At the age of nineteen, when Mozart, Mendelssohn, and Schubert had penned some of their finest works, he had done very little of value, and there was small promise of the high future for which he was destined.

The question of his career, student-days being over, was now before him, and he decided upon Copenhagen as a good centre. Here he came under the influence of Niels Gade, the greatest Danish composer, who loomed much more largely in the world's eye at that time than he does to-day. Grieg seems to have profited much by Gade's advice and suggestions as to his compositions. But it was not in his steps that Grieg was destined to follow, for far greater influences were upon him in the much more romantic and inspiring forms of Ole Bull and Richard Nordraak, the latter a Norwegian composer of great originality, who unfortunately died at the age of twenty-three.

To accompany Bull, the ardent prophet of all the potentialities of Norse song, to converse and discuss with Nordraak, the patriot composer, was to join their camp, and to push the cause of Norwegian music to the utmost. Grieg and

Nordraak started in Copenhagen a "Euterpe" Society to produce works of young Northern composers, and this did useful service, giving Grieg an idea of the best music of the rising school, and enlarging his mind so that he grasped the possibilities of other modes of thought than the classic and romantic examples of German music with which Leipsic had provided him. At this point he emerged from the chrysalis shape of the student, and gradually developed into the more beautiful and individual composer whose music is now a household language.

MARRIAGE AND ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT

THE turning-point in Grieg's career had now been reached, that wondrous parting in the roads, one of which would have led to oblivion had it been followed. Happily the composer chose, no doubt all unconsciously, that which shaped towards Fame. It is quite easy to see what Grieg would have become if he had not allowed his individuality full play; doubtless he would have been an excellent musician, doing thoroughly sound work, and exercising a healthful influence on all with whom he came in musical contact. But this would have been only what hundreds of men are doing. A combination of happy circumstances helped Grieg, and he had the genius to take advantage of them; his undoubted gifts, his energy and determination, the inspiring influence of his friends, and the untrodden fields to which he had free access were all contributory causes to the artistic achievements of his later life.

It is not given to all men, even to those who have the stamp of genius, to find a new medium of expression for their thoughts. There have been great composers, Mendelssohn for example, who, with all their exquisitely polished output and chastely beautiful inspirations, cannot be considered to have added any new feature, any genuinely original turn, to the idiom of musical expression. When lofty heights have been reached under such conditions, it is all the greater tribute to the artist who, by the sheer beauty of his works, soars above his fellows. Grieg, however, possessed what some others have lacked, a truly individual feeling, which transformed the crude peasant songs and dances of the North into shapes of refined elegance and fascinating charm.

This was far from being achieved at a single step. When Grieg first joined hands with Nordraak he was still under the influence of Leipsic, and was a capable musician, but no epoch-making composer. His communion with his strangely gifted *confrère*, and the analysis of the best points in the works which the "Euterpe" Society brought forward, were factors towards shaping his ideas, while diligent study and the careful cultivation of his rare gifts supplied the

rest. As he grew older he waxed stronger still in the use of his weapons, and, had bodily health permitted, might have accomplished even greater things; as it was, he never looked back, and though in later years his compositions became few in number and small in calibre, the quality of them remained for the most part at that excellent pitch to which he raised his early songs and pianoforte pieces.

It was in a tiny song—"Ich liebe dich"—that Grieg gave early promise of the greatness in him: written in 1864, he penned this poetical and impassioned love-song as a tribute to Nina Hagerup, his cousin. As was the case with Schumann, the impetus of the divine passion inspired the composer with some of his best ideas; and the three years which elapsed before he was able to marry his beloved witnessed the appearance of many fine works, such as the Violin Sonata in F, and the overture "In Autumn."

He could not marry until he had established some sort of a position, so having left Copenhagen Grieg settled in Christiania, and began the routine work of organ-playing, teaching, composing and conducting, which is the lot of thousands. A weaker man would have drifted into

the rut of conventionalism, but Grieg had sterner stuff in him; moreover, his cousin was an accomplished singer, and a concert the two gave, of Grieg's compositions, with the help of Lady Hallé, in 1866, proved a stepping-stone for higher things.

The public, enamoured of the idea of a Norwegian school of musical thought, rallied round him, and supplied him with much work as a teacher. Encouraged by success, he and his cousin were married in 1867, but their early happiness was sadly clouded two years later when their only child, a little girl of thirteen months, died. Eight years of heavy work in Christiania, where Grieg conducted the Philharmonic Society and gave subscription concerts, trying, amidst much discouragement, to elevate the public taste, must have put a severe strain upon his frail constitution; and yet during this time, and in his holiday leisure, he penned such fine works as the Second Violin Sonata and the Pianoforte Concerto.

Grieg's reputation abroad was growing; Liszt had come across his one and only pianoforte Sonata, and had been so delighted with it that he wrote the composer, still only twenty-four years old, a glowing letter of satisfaction,

THE FRIEDRICHSKIRCHE, COPENHAGEN

Where Grieg acted as organist from 1862 to 1864

and a cordial invitation to visit him. So impressed was the Government of Norway with the commendation of the great Abbé that it granted Grieg a sum of money to proceed to Rome to visit Liszt. The great pianist-composer hailed the fresh voice from the North as something truly invigorating and inspired, and thus the foundation of Grieg's reputation was firmly established. Liszt's interest in his compositions, his advice to Grieg to pursue steadily the new road upon which he had started acted as additional spurs, and encouraged the Norwegian to further efforts. And in 1874, when the kindly Government bestowed upon him an annual grant of 1,600 crowns (about £90), a seemingly trivial amount, but very useful in a country where money goes as far as it does in Norway, he determined, at the early age of thirty-one, to give up teaching and to devote his life to composing and to making his compositions known.

And herein undoubtedly the world has gained largely. The wise forethought of a pension, which means but little to a government, means a great deal to a struggling composer. Had Mozart and Schubert been assured of such financial help, they would not have come to

premature ends in dire poverty: who knows what further masterpieces they might have given to the world? Here again Grieg was fortunate in finding himself so early in life able to relinquish the drudgery of routine work.

Leaving Christiania he settled in Bergen, and at once set to work upon the composition of incidental music to Ibsen's play, "Peer Gynt," his most widely-known composition. The dramatist and musician worked cordially together, and Grieg's music contributed more than a little to the presentation of Ibsen's essentially un-stage-like play. The glory of association with the world-renowned author doubtless inspired Grieg to no small extent, and from its production, on 24th February, 1876, at Christiania, he became world-known as the composer of the "Peer-Gynt" music, incidental numbers of which are so beloved and esteemed by the public in their concert-room shape: undoubtedly Grieg's music has vitalized Ibsen's play to an enormous extent, and has contributed largely to the fact that it holds the boards as it does.

With the writing of the "Peer-Gynt" music Grieg won his bid for fame, and hereafter he became world-beloved. Launched on the tide of success he was no longer the struggling com-

poser, but was able, with an assured future, to move about freely from country to country, making his works known by performances at concerts, and living wherever the fancy took him.

MATURE LIFE

BEING no longer confined by duties as teacher or conductor to any fixed spot, Grieg lived in various parts of Norway. For a time he returned to Christiania, then in 1877 he retired to a sequestered spot on the well-known Hardanger fjord, between Eide and Odde. Many who have steamed or sailed down the waters of this ever-narrowing, cliff-surrounded piece of water will retain a thrilling remembrance of its stern mountainous sides, with the glaciers of the Folgefond descending from the great snow-fields and the sombre hills dotted with tiny houses and farms. A truly ideal place for the contemplation of nature, a study which Grieg so well loved. Yet Lofthus, as the hamlet is called, had its drawbacks, for a winter storm rendered unhabitable the little cottage where he worked, and it had to be removed with the aid of the peasants.

For some eight years, however, Grieg made Lofthus his headquarters (from 1877 to 1885),

GRIEG'S HOUSE AT TROLDHAUGEN

visiting continental cities from time to time. One such visit was to his old student home, Leipsic, where he appeared as solo-pianist at the Gewandhaus concert in 1879. The cachet of distinction applies to those who perform at these historic concerts, and Grieg's renown was ever on the increase. The strain which he put upon himself was very great, and his impaired vitality resented the stress of virtuoso performances: he was nervous and anxious beforehand, and when all was over, very exhausted. He still retained an occasional post as a conductor (for a man cannot *always* be composing) a series of concerts at Bergen in 1880, 1881, and 1882, being under his direction.

At length, in 1885, he determined to build himself a house, and selected a little village some few miles outside Bergen, his native town. Here he raised, in a charming position, his villa "Troldhaugen," which was his home until his death in 1907. High upon a ridge, on a little projecting neck of land, it stands with an arm of the fjord on either side. Being quite off the track for the ordinary tourist it was an ideal spot for retirement and work even if the climate of the west coast of Norway, a notoriously wet one, was by no means suitable for him. Although

he often thought of moving nearer to the capital, Grieg remained faithful to his villa, making it his headquarters for the rest of his life.

Soon after settling at Troldhaugen he paid his first visit to England in company with Madame Grieg, whose powers as a vocalist have been already mentioned. Great triumphs awaited him at the concert of the Philharmonic Society, held on 3rd May, 1888, at which he played his Pianoforte Concerto, and conducted his Elegiac Melodies for Orchestra. Even warmer enthusiasm was aroused by a concert of pianoforte pieces and songs which he gave with Madame Grieg's assistance a fortnight later: the artistic co-operation of the two performers was so satisfying and so complete that it laid the foundation stone upon which has been reared the pillar of affection where his beautiful songs now stand. Just as Madame Schumann by her wonderful interpretation of her husband's marvellous pianoforte works established them in high favour, in the midst of great opposition, in every land in Europe, so Madame Grieg, by her artistic insight and feeling, convinced the public of the genuine worth and beauty of those songs which are of all the Norwegian master's compositions the most likely to endure. As an

VIEW FROM TROLDHAUGEN

interpretative artist, Madame Grieg would not pretend to compare with the great Clara Schumann: an American critic, Joachim Reinhard, speaks thus of her:

> Nothing were easier than to criticise Mrs. Grieg's singing . . . yet no singing ever made such impression on me as hers. . . . We suffer with this woman, cry, laugh, are jubilant, until at last all is over, and we go home, suddenly recalling that in the first three or four bars of such and such a song Mrs. Grieg made such and such mistakes. It is a strange but incontrovertible fact, that nobody ever observed any errors in the latter part of her songs.

This is high testimony: so also is the tribute paid to her by Tchaikovsky, who, during this same year (1888) met the Griegs; writing in the diary of his tour he says:

> In the first place she proved to be an excellent, though not very finished singer; secondly, I have never met a better informed or more highly cultivated woman; thirdly, I was soon convinced that Madame Grieg was as amiable, as gentle, as childishly simple and without guile as her celebrated husband.

Grieg and his wife visited a few of the great continental cities, but the strain of a long continuous tour was not to be thought of, and these

concerts were but occasional relief and change from the regular life of quiet home work spent at Troldhaugen. The last public appearance of Madame Grieg in England was in 1898, when she sang in London, and also at Windsor Castle before Queen Victoria.

The many calls upon a successful composer were not, of course, all to be avoided, and Grieg made fairly frequent journeys hither and thither. In 1889 he was again in this country, conducting the first performance of his "Peer-Gynt" music at a Philharmonic concert, and adding fresh laurels to his ever-growing reputation. But he would not visit France at this time: indeed, his refusal to do so made him many enemies in that country. Grieg, however, was an ardent patriot, and the "affaire Dreyfus" so rankled in his mind that he expressed himself in no mild terms on the subject. "I am indignant," he wrote to Colonne, the great French conductor, "at the contempt for justice shown in your country, and therefore unable to enter into relations with the French public." Grieg even went to the length of allowing his refusal to be inserted in the French papers, a somewhat impolitic move, which had unpleasant results later on, for when, eight years later, he

appeared in Paris to conduct some of his works, his opponents hissed, blew whistles, and threatened to create a great disturbance. Grieg's friends, however, predominated, and all passed off happily, but the experience was an unpleasant one.

In 1890 Grieg was made a member of the French Academy of Fine Arts, and, three years later, he was one of the five great composers whom Cambridge honoured by the presentation of the honorary degree of Mus. Doc., the others being Boito, Max Bruch, Saint-Saens, and Tchaikovsky. The University Musical Society was celebrating its jubilee, and the great continental composers were each invited to conduct one of their own works at a concert given in the Guildhall. To the great disappointment of all, Grieg was ill, and unable to attend either the concert or the Congregation of the Senate, and the degree was not conferred upon him until the next year, 1894, when he was able to be present in person to receive it on the 10th of May.

Wherever Grieg went his playing charmed by its refinement, sympathy, and perfect taste. He created tremendous enthusiasm in Vienna in 1896 and 1897, and certainly rendered his own

compositions in an unapproachable manner; even the hostile section in Paris, when he eventually performed there in 1903, had to admit the worth of the artist, and applauded him as a musician although condemning his political interferences. As a conductor he also knew how to get effects out of his players, and his renderings were a miracle of delicacy and grace.

Enthusiasm over his music naturally reached a high pitch in the north, and at Copenhagen, Christiania, and Stockholm he could always command crowded audiences. His rare appearances in this country were signals for a rush of his admirers to the concert hall, and although Madame Grieg did not, in the later years of her husband's life, sing in public, his concerts usually included a number of his songs, rendered by some singer in whose artistic powers he felt unbounded confidence.

It was in May, 1906, that Grieg last appeared in England, giving two concerts at Queen's Hall, one orchestral and the other chamber. At the first he conducted the "Peer Gynt" Suite, Bergliot, the Pianoforte Concerto, etc., and at the second took part in his Third Violin Sonata, his Violoncello Sonata, and some solo pieces, besides accompanying the songs sung in Nor-

wegian and Danish by Mlle. Emma Holmstrand. A week or so later, on 29th May, he went to Oxford for the honorary degree of Doctor of Music. The following account from an eye-witness appeared soon after his death in the "Manchester Guardian":

As Grieg's eyes wandered over the tiers of young faces around him while his introducer (Sir Hubert Parry, if I remember rightly) read the usual long Latin eulogy before presenting him to the Vice-Chancellor, it was a sad and a strong face that we saw—one might almost have said a grim face but that there was nothing of hardness in it, a face which must have inspired both respect and affection in all who met him. Yet as the little, old-looking man stood there in the red and yellow gown of a Doctor of Music there was something incongruous about his appearance—the head, encircled with long, straight white hair, appearing above the still stiffer, straighter lines of gaudy brocaded silk, which descended to the ground in the form of a regular cone; and the simile of one lady visitor, who remarked that they had made him look just like a pen-wiper, was irresistibly accurate.

Death frustrated Grieg's intention of visiting England in the autumn of the following year, and therefore the programme, of which a reproduction appears on page 76, is a record of his last public performance in this country.

THE LAST SUMMER

GRIEG spent a good deal of the summer of 1907 at Troldhaugen. Earlier in the year he had visited Germany and Denmark to conduct and to play at concerts,[1] and the strain had

[1] The author is obliged to Miss Hildegard Werner of Newcastle for the following account of Grieg's last public appearances: "The last time Grieg appeared at a concert in Norway was on March 5th, 1907, when he and Madame Grieg assisted the pianist and composer, Julius Röntgen of Amsterdam, at his concert in Christiania. Grieg played his Norwegian dances, Op. 35, for four hands with Röntgen at that occasion. On March 21st, Grieg, assisted by the Danish singer, Miss Ellen Beck, the pianist Miss Stockmarr and an orchestra, gave his last concert in Copenhagen. From Copenhagen Grieg went to Munich, a city he had not visited for the last thirty years. Here, with the assistance of Fraulein Laura Hilgermann of Vienna, the pianist, Arthur de Greef, of Brussels, and the Kaim orchestra, Grieg gave a concert at which his own compositions were performed with great success. The Norse composer was received with jubilation as soon as he appeared on the concert platform. Shortly afterwards we find Grieg in Berlin, where he was received as 'a rare and highly honoured guest.' Whilst in the German capital he gave a concert, at which his 'Sigurd Jorsalfar'

Anderson photo]

GRIEG AND HIS WIFE

been, as before, severely felt, so much so that he was very ill indeed. But the return to his own native soil had the usual effect of restoring him to comparatively good health, and he was busy with plans for that winter which he was never destined to see. First in his mind was the promised visit to England, in October, to conduct some of his compositions at the Leeds Festival, and to take part in two London concerts. Then there were to be concerts in Vienna, Budapest, and Bucharest, and many schemes for a busy winter were in his mind. Meanwhile the holiday season was quietly spent at home, in the simple life that he loved, with its unexciting round of little pleasures and little duties.

The last visitor to Grieg at Troldhaugen was Percy Grainger, the talented young Australian pianist. When Grieg came to England in 1906 he had met Mr. Grainger, and a firm friendship was soon established between the old musician and the young. So far did this progress that

and 'Bergliot' were rendered under his *bâton*. The Scandinavian pianist, Halfdan Cleve, played the pianoforte concerto in A minor, and the Swedish singer, Madame Ellen Guldbrandson, sang several of his songs to the piano accompaniments played by the composer. At the end of April Grieg also gave a concert at Kiel, at which Miss Ellen Beck sang some of his songs."

Grieg invited Grainger to visit him in the summer, but for various causes a year elapsed before this visit was actually paid. In July, 1907, however, Percy Grainger found himself for a period of three weeks or so an inmate of the villa near Bergen, and the author of this little book wishes here to thank Mr. Grainger for much of the information which now follows, and which he has so kindly supplied, and also for allowing him to read through the most entertaining diary which he kept of his visit.

Grieg worked sometimes in the house, sometimes in the little hut in the garden; the latter was most quaintly decorated with a picture of the "Möllargutten" (the "Miller's-Man," the typical nineteenth century Norwegian fiddler whom Grieg mentions several times in his "Slåtter") on the walls. Near by hung an old carved Hardanger fiddle. A few bookshelves, an old muffled pianoforte, and a stove completed the modest furniture, the room containing little else save a pair of straw overshoes which the composer used for working in during bad weather. Here it was that he worked busily, the rescoring of his Pianoforte Concerto for the Leeds Festival occupying much of his attention during the last summer. The real object of the

rescoring was to add parts for a second pair of horns, the original only containing one pair. The two musicians discussed eagerly the formation of a Norwegian Folk-Song Society, which was to be, if possible, carried into effect during the winter. Grieg was delighted and impressed with the work done by the English Folk-Song Society in this direction, and greatly admired many of the old melodies which Grainger had preserved by a phonograph. He lamented that no Norwegian had undertaken, for the love of it, to do a similar work for Norway, and seeing that his own health forbade his taking active part in such a work, gladly hailed Grainger's suggestion that he should visit remote parts of Norway with a phonograph in the summer of 1908. One can understand Grieg's enthusiasm over such a project, and the "Slåtter" alone, materials of which came from many remote parts of the country, show how he would have still further laboured in such a cause.

Grieg was very interested also in hearing Grainger play on the pianoforte, amongst other things, a number of English compositions. Speaking of musical life in England he specially commented on works he had seen by Roger Quilter, the young English composer, whose fresh per-

sonality had pleased him greatly, and of his admiration for the orchestral conducting of Henry J. Wood, whom he considered to be doing fine work in our country. In the evenings a friend or two would sometimes drop in to take part in the discussion, or to lend a delighted ear to Fru Grieg, who occasionally sang to the little private circle. Grieg was really ill during the whole of Grainger's visit, his asthma being troublesome, but he seemed no worse than he had been for some few years past. His energy, too, was amazing. He would insist on rowing them all about in his little boat on the fjord, and even ran to get in the boat first, so that no one else should seize the oars. In driving he was quite firm in not allowing anyone to help him descend from the carriage.

One result of his asthma was that he could not walk and speak at the same time. When he spoke, therefore, he would stand still in the middle of the road, his companions also stopping. With the last few words of his sentence he would trot off again, quite unexpectedly, leaving his friends to follow, when they would walk on until he again had a remark to make. Before Grainger left, Grieg was very anxious that he should see some really characteristic

Norwegian scenery, so an expedition was planned on August 3rd to a mountain, near Bergen, called "Blaamanden" (the Blue Man). The climbing was a great effort to Grieg, and he had constantly to stop to breathe. He stuck to his task, however, and at length, delighted, reached the top, revelling in the glorious view and the fresh free air. "Here we need a peasant fiddler to play a dance for us," said he, and no doubt his high spirits would have allowed him to take part in such a dance had the fiddler been at hand. But the moment of depression followed upon exaltation, and with a possible premonition of his nearing end he exclaimed, "I shall never get up here again."

The next day, however, found him sufficiently in health to drive into Bergen and to see Grainger, his departing guest, aboard his steamer, which sailed from the very quay from which he himself hoped shortly to leave for his winter visits.

Three weeks after this Grieg again went to Bergen. He had booked a passage on a boat leaving there on September 3rd for Christiania, where he intended to stay until the time came for him to cross to England for Leeds. But ere that day arrived his last illness came upon him,

and instead of following his luggage on board he went to a hotel, and thence to a hospital, his attack being so severe and sudden that he could not be conveyed to his own home but a few miles distant. The evening of the 3rd found him sleepless and restless, and during the night, turning to the wife who watched lovingly by his bedside he said, "This, then, is the end." In the early morning of the 4th his frail body drew its last breath, and he died aged sixty-four.

The funeral took place at Bergen on September 9th in the presence of more than 40,000 people. Previous to this many thousands passed before the coffin as it lay in the Art and Industrial Museum, and there was a movement throughout the whole of Norway to do honour to the memory of her gifted son. Wreaths from foreign potentates and native institutions were strewn on the grave, and outward manifestations of regret were everywhere visible, some ten thousand people taking part in the procession. Much of Grieg's own music was played by string orchestras during the ceremony, including the March which he had composed forty years previously for the death of his friend Nordraak.

The concerts at Leeds and in London, shorn

HOTEL BRISTOL, COPENHAGEN

Where Grieg and his wife stayed when spending the winter months in Copenhagen

of their chief attraction, were duly held as "In Memoriam" functions, the same programmes as originally designed being adhered to. Grieg left the greater part of his modest fortune (some £15,000) to musical and dramatic institutions in Bergen, thus evidencing his love of home and country to the very end.

GRIEG'S ART. WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN HIS MUSIC.

TWO facts about Grieg may be readily admitted: one is, that he cannot rank amongst the very greatest composers; the other, that whenever refined taste and artistic discrimination is present, his music is always popular and beloved. The two are not irreconcilable. One cannot always remain in rapt contemplation of the Divine, or be absorbed in the study of the stupendous, the majestic, or the sublime. At times the mind turns for refreshment to the simple, and so long as this is both good and true, is recuperated thereby.

When Grieg's pianoforte pieces were first extensively played in this country they were by no means considered "simple": the early hearers were mystified by what they considered, and called "wrong notes." We have now become so accustomed to strange and wondrous harmonies that those of Grieg rarely strike us as being anything extraordinary. But Grieg was a great harmonic innovator, and undoubtedly dis-

covered and made use of chords that, a quarter of a century or more ago, must have fallen very strangely on the ear. Even to-day young people who have heard little, except the classical sonatinas and modern pieces of a kindred diatonic order, find their initiation into Griegian mysteries a somewhat trying ordeal. And when we add to this strangeness of harmony the curious melodies that arise from frequent use of the old tunes which have been constructed from *modes* (the predecessors of scales), the feeling that "something is wrong" often arises in the inexperienced mind. But study and deeper knowledge familiarize these very points, and the early stumbling-blocks become landmarks of delight, and centres of affection.

In the Introduction I said that Grieg was an artist in the miniature. He excelled in the small forms, the short pianoforte piece and song; and his forms are so lucid and so easy to understand, and withal his melodies are so clear and simple, that the more complex nature of his harmonies and rhythms has not prevented him from becoming, as one writer has pointed out, the most popular musician in the home life of England since Mendelssohn.

For he is indeed more a master for the home

than for the concert hall. He wrote no Absolute Music, and his pieces all have titles. Unlike Schumann, who has the credit of having composed his pieces and found titles for them afterwards, Grieg chose his titles and wove around them a series of beautiful mood pictures in melody and rhythm which bring before our eyes the exact image of what he had in his mind. This strong connection between title and matter, added to simplicity of structure, and highly polished workmanship, account for, and certainly justify, the esteem and love which every artistic home has for Grieg.

What, then, are we specially to look for in the music of Grieg? The greatest and loftiest of thoughts, and the deepest of utterances, perhaps not. But a concise and definite exposition of some mood-picture, portrayed with exquisite delicacy and infinite charm—the outcome of laborious and fastidious care. In the songs, where the sense of the words has to be portrayed, Grieg is perhaps less himself than in the pianoforte pieces—certainly he is less national and characteristic, although his own mood can never be mistaken. But the national idiom is very much to the fore in his slight pieces, of which there are so many for the pianoforte.

This nationality is not perhaps so very easy for us in England to recognize or realize. In Norway, where Grieg spoke to the people through a medium which they thoroughly and readily grasped, through a series of scenes of every-day life, he was immediately understood, and his harmonies seem to have been the outcome of a desire to fit suitable chords to the peculiar style of melody which he used as a basis for his work. In England we appreciate clearly enough the fact that Grieg's music is unlike any other, but it is not so easy for us to understand why this is so. The real factor in the case seems to be the individuality of the man himself, a point which the Norwegian composers have not all grasped.

For in Norway (as well as in England and other countries) people have composed in a style which they have imitated from Grieg, believing that they were imitating Norwegian music. It therefore frequently happens that far too little credit is given where it is most due; for the material made use of by Grieg is vastly less important than the individual colouring which he himself gave it: had it not been for his delightfully fresh genius, Norwegian melodies, rhythms, and figures might have been as little in evidence

in music now as they were fifty years ago. In whatever style he had adopted Grieg would doubtless have been a good (if not a great) composer, but he happened to find new idioms of expression, and new sources of inspiration, and put them to excellent use.

It was his training, and the influence of the great German masters, whose music he studied in Leipsic, which enabled him to become something more than a national composer; his education fitted him to appeal not merely to his own countrymen, but to all those who love artistic and beautiful music. We must look to him to express in musical terms all the charming pictures of country life, the little incidents of a peaceful existence, and the readily found emotional phases which are suggested by the titles of his pieces. He is a composer of programme music, and an emotional composer. There is no complex or abstruse design in his structures; all is lucid and clear, but the emotional side is seldom lacking; we never find mere intellectuality uncoloured by expression. This is why Grieg is so easy to listen to, and so easily appreciated. There is that in every one of our natures which will respond to his appeals, and the untrained and inexperienced are as susceptible to

the charm of his music as is the cultured musician.

Moreover, one may hear a great deal of Grieg without getting tired. There are certain mannerisms in his music which, perhaps, eventually pall after a surfeit; but his wealth of variety is such that it is long before there is any feeling of satiety. His different mood-pictures are all beautiful, and if perhaps the phase of melancholy somewhat predominates, it by no means overrides the others, nor forces itself upon us, as it does in Tchaikovsky. Picturesqueness, daintiness, lucidity, sympathy, and national colour are the elements in Grieg's music that place it where it is in the hearts and affections of his many admirers.

Opinions on Grieg's music, of course, vary. Between, on the one hand, the American critic Huneker, who calls it "map music" (meaning thereby, I suppose, that you can always tell from it where you are); and, on the other, Mr. Finck, who would not give up Solvejg's "Cradle Song," "for all the songs of Brahms, Hugo Wolf, and Richard Strauss put together," there is a great gulf fixed. Huneker thinks that Grieg said all that he had to say in his early pianoforte, and violin, sonatas, Op. 7 and 8, quite overlooking appar-

ently the beautiful songs, and such music as "Peer Gynt," which show great advances on the earlier works. A more just estimate is formed of him by Dannreuther and by Niecks, the latter of whom says:

> Wherein lies the secret of Grieg's more than transient success? It lies in the poetic nature of the man—a nature that derives its character from his individual constitution in the first place, and only in the second place from the inspiration yielded by his country and people. In short, what of his music will live, will live thanks to Grieg the poet not to Grieg the Norwegian!

Grieg used to complain somewhat of the attitude of German critics towards his music, saying that they tried him in the Wagner box and in the Brahms box and that because he would not fit either he was condemned. "Why cannot they put me into a box by myself?" he used to complain. Perhaps one of the most severe pieces of German criticism was that which accused Grieg of getting stuck in the fjord and never getting out. To my mind this criticism, applied to his earlier compositions, is much more justified in some of the later. The earlier pieces are nearly all glowing with a colour and freshness that, although individual, possess far too great a

wealth of variety for them to be considered as being entirely in one groove. But in some of the later pianoforte pieces the influence of the curious melodic intervals (the raised fourth from the key-note, etc.), which Grieg employed intentionally in such national pieces as the set of "Slåtter" obtrude somewhat aggressively into what are meant to be his more original and fanciful creations.

We cannot perhaps have a better view of Grieg's work than that which (according to the Stockholm "Svensk Musik Tidning") he himself said of it:

> Tone poets like Bach and Beethoven have erected temples and churches upon high hills. I have built abodes where people can feel at home and happy; in other words, in style and form I belong to the German Romantic School of Schumann. But I have also imbibed much from the source of national music, *i.e.*, I have made use of the rich treasures of Norwegian Folk melodies, and it is from that hitherto little used emanation of the soul of the people that I have created a national musical art.

ANECDOTES AND CHARACTERISTIC TRAITS

THE character of a great man is often readily discerned by his actions or comments upon small matters. We find in such the true individuality of the man, which often peeps out in things of small moment.

There is little doubt that Grieg, in youth, suffered somewhat from a lack of self-reliance. Fortunately for him the influence upon him of Richard Nordraak (who had no lack of this engaging quality) was a strong one, and thanks to him, and to Liszt's advice to the Norwegian "not to let himself be intimidated," Grieg found the strength of mind to pursue his path of original thought. Yet there are instances of his giving way before opposition; the second of the early "Humoresques, Op. 6," for example, was in the difficult key of G sharp minor. But for the sake of the publisher and performer, he allowed it to be printed in the simple key of A minor. We can hardly imagine the adoption of

GRIEG AT THE AGE OF SIXTY

such a course of non-resistance by Wagner and Brahms. The characters of the three men were as different as is their music.

Yet, his face having been set to the plough, he stuck to his furrow. Like many another he was keenly susceptible to adverse criticism, but it did not turn him aside from his path, nor cause him to swerve from the course he had set for himself. No persons in early life had more influence upon him than his father and Ole Bull; yet he was not unduly discouraged by the fact that neither of them cared for nor appreciated his compositions. His hero-worship for Gade, the magnetic star who drew him to settle in Copenhagen, must have suffered a blow when the Danish composer exhorted him to be "less Norwegian." But Nordraak, with his firm convictions, was a pillar of strength to him, and he refused to look back. Discouraged he may have been, but perhaps he realized that such men as Gade and Reinecke (the latter is credited with having kept the famous Pianoforte Concerto for weeks, and with finally returning it without a word of comment) were in the rear-guard of a group of composers whose best representatives had long passed by, while he could picture himself in the van of a new body fighting for fresh

ideals and striving to grapple with new media of expression hitherto untried.

When favourable criticism came before his notice he was intensely pleased and proud. We have seen the very great effect of Liszt's encouragement, it remained with him all his life. Grieg said of the approbation he then received: "When bitterness and disappointment are in store for me, I shall recall his words, and the remembrance of that hour will have a wonderful power to uphold me in days of adversity." Björnson and Ibsen were also powerful factors in stimulating him to increased efforts, and his somewhat despondent turn of mind, due to his fragile health, was repeatedly braced up by similar helpful and strengthening encouragement.

His natural simplicity is amusingly illustrated by the story of an incident which Mr. Percy Grainger has narrated to me. On the way up the "Blue Man," the excursion which has already been mentioned, a party of Norse-American tourists recognized the composer, and began to chant his praises in no measured terms. Grieg was at first pleased, but a little further acquaintance revealed the fact that the tourists were somewhat under the influence of strong drink.

In a sad tone he exclaimed, "It is ever thus, whenever I receive ovations it is always from *fulde folk*" (the drunken). This was not merely a humorous comment, but put forward in all seriousness.

That Grieg possessed a sense of humour is evident from the following narrative. At the close of a function at a hotel, a certain Danish composer, notable for his plagiarism, was unable to find his overcoat, and went about loudly complaining thereof. He came to Grieg exclaiming that someone must have stolen it. "After all," said Grieg, "that would only be a just retaliation, for *you steal from us all.*"

As a performer at concerts Grieg was frequently overcome by nervousness: Ernest Closson, in "Edvard Grieg et la Musique Scandinave," says that the giving of a whole concert, unassisted by others, used to reduce him to a state of feverish excitement, and he would pace the artists' room with restless step and anxious glance, muttering to himself, and doubting his ability to carry all to a successful issue. And when all was over, he would be in a state of absolute prostration, his physique evidently being unequal to the demands made upon it. He was severely self-critical in all that he did,

and, like Beethoven, would take endless pains over everything, every detail, never ceasing to worry until his task was accomplished entirely to his satisfaction, and he could see no further scope for alteration or improvement. Thus it is that master-works are made, whether cast in large mould or small.

There is ample evidence of the absolute simplicity and childishness of Grieg's character, unaltered through all his sixty years. That he could be angry on occasion only means that he was a man, but for the most part, as his portraits show, he was guileless, unspotted of the world, and a lover of the simple things of his every-day experience. His was no proud nature, to hold itself aloof, or to look with cold eye on the small joys and pleasures of those with whom he came in contact. He loved to mix with the Hardanger peasants, and would go to their simple village weddings, and name-days, and join with them in drinking from the common bowl, all reeking and shining with stains of tobacco though it might be. We have only to note the titles which he bestowed upon his various pianoforte pieces to see that his heart was set upon the rustic life that surrounded him, and that he loved nothing better than to express in musical

idiom the village procession, the peasant cradle-song, the legendary tale, and the characteristic dance that formed the common incidents of his home life. Thus there is the spirit of *truth* in his music which will make it live after so much that is manufactured and artificial in feeling has long passed into the limbo of the forgotten.

GRIEG'S GREATEST WORKS

IT is not generally in the works of large dimension that Grieg has made his most irresistible appeal; by the majority of those who have studied the subject it is believed that he will go down to posterity as a charming lyrical writer of solo songs, and pianoforte pieces, and that his fame will endure in these exquisitely elegant creations, rather than in his somewhat small number of larger works.

THE SONGS

As a song-writer he has been compared with Schubert, and his one hundred and twenty-five songs contain specimens of every type, very often of surpassing beauty. Like Schubert he depicts every phase of emotional feeling, love, friendship, enmity, despair, suffering, exaltation: he plays on every string of joy and of sorrow, but harps most repeatedly and most delightfully on that of national and patriotic feeling.

The most widely known and popular of all Grieg's songs is the passionate and exotic, "I love thee," written during his courtship. Amongst others may be mentioned the two songs for Solvejg (from "Peer Gynt"), "A Swan," "Two Brown Eyes," "Margaret's Cradle-Song," "The Princess," "A Cradle-Song," "The First Meeting," "A Mother's Grief," "Wood-Wanderings," and the superb and dramatic "Autumn Storms." All of these are favourites both with the public, and amongst amateurs. Grieg chose his words from such writers as Ibsen, Björnson, Heine, H. C. Andersen, and Vinje. Those of original Norwegian origin are, of course, mostly performed in translated versions. Grieg's affection for certain of his songs may be noted from the fact that he arranged them in later life for pianoforte or orchestral rendering without words.

The Smaller Pianoforte Pieces

It is sometimes levelled as a reproach at Grieg's pianoforte pieces that his early books of "Lyrische Stücke" are in the hands of every school-girl. Seeing how beautiful and poetical these pieces are, this is a matter rather for

felicitation than for contempt, and it would be as well if the children of our country were never supplied with anything less worthy of their study. As models of taste, elegance, and refinement, the Grieg pieces are unsurpassed, and the only reason that the later books of Lyric Pieces have not become so popular as the earlier ones is that the demands made upon the technique of the performer are so much greater.

The ten books of Lyric Pieces (sixty-six numbers in all) contain much imperishable music. The first and easiest set is to be found in almost every household. Perhaps the most fascinating examples from the other books may be the "Berceuse" (from Book II), "Butterfly," "Erotik," and "To the Spring" (Book III), "March of the Dwarfs" (Book V), "She Dances" (Book VI), "Wedding Day" (Book VIII), and "Cradle-Song" (Book IX).

Besides the Lyric Pieces, the "Humoreskes" (Op. 6), the "Sketches of Norwegian Life" (including the long-famous "Norwegian Bridal Procession"), and the books of dances are all highly popular. The latest books, including the "Slåtter" or peasant dances, are extraordinarily characteristic, although not yet so well known. But the "Slåtter" (Op. 72) should be studied

by those who wish to see the influence of country and surroundings upon the composer, who has here arranged many of the folk songs and dances from other sources, and supplied copious notes and explanations of their particular qualities.

The Larger Pianoforte Works

Chief of these is the famous Concerto for pianoforte and orchestra in A minor, the rescoring of which was in Grieg's hands at the time of his death, although in its original form it first appeared in 1868, when he was only twenty-five years of age. It is in three movements, a fiery and bold *Allegro* in A minor, a tender *Adagio* in D flat major, and a "national" sounding finale in A minor. Its difficulties are prodigious, but it is highly effective, and is constantly played in our concert rooms.

As there is only one Concerto, so there is but one Sonata for the pianoforte, an early work in E minor. It contains four movements, of which the first two are the best, the dreamy and impassioned slow movement forming a glorious and tender tone poem.

The "Ballade" in G minor (Op. 24), is a set

of variations upon a somewhat sombre national melody. This is sometimes used for concert purposes, the knowledge of pianoforte technique which Grieg possessed being ably utilized in the brilliant and difficult variations which are skilfully worked up into a consistent whole.

The Chamber Music

There is one string quartette in G minor, a very unconventional but beautiful example. Better known are the three sonatas for violin and pianoforte (in F, G, and C minor respectively). It was after hearing the second of these that Gade implored Grieg to be "less national" in the next, to which our composer replied by saying that he would indeed be "more so," a threat which he eventually carried out. The F major has a delightfully rippling opening movement which has been likened to the gliding of a boat over the sea; the second sonata has more of despair and pain. "It is" (according to one writer) "the gift to the world of a man who has shivered in the cold mists of night, and has learned the meaning of grief and disappointment." The C minor sonata evidences still further development and is heroic, passionate

and vigorous. Having less perhaps of readily appreciated melody than the two earlier ones, it has not yet risen to the same heights of popularity. The single sonata for violoncello and pianoforte in A minor, perhaps hardly ranks with the violin sonatas.

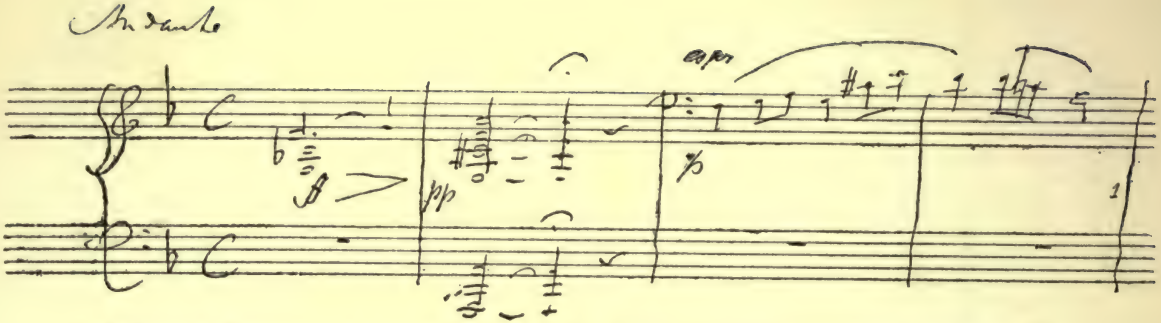
The Orchestral Works

Apart from the "Peer-Gynt" music described elsewhere, there is little of Grieg's orchestral work that has any considerable hold upon the public. Perhaps the suite "From Holberg's Time" has the greatest following; it is for string orchestra only. The overture, "In Autumn," is occasionally given a hearing, and the "Funeral March" written years ago for Nordraak, and rescored for string orchestra for Grieg's own funeral, will probably be heard more of.

Other Works

Amongst the more frequently heard of these may be mentioned "Bergliot," a Björnson poem for recitation with orchestral accompaniment, and the "Recognition of Land," a choral number for men's voices with orchestra. Performances

of choral works, "At the Cloister Gate" (female voices) and of the scenes from "Olav Trygavson," are occasionally given. It is curious that Grieg's own special favourite work, "Den Bergteckne" ("Astray in the Hills"), a ballad for baritone solo, two horns and strings, is but slightly known.



FACSIMILE (SLIGHTLY REDUCED) OF THE MS. OF THE OPENING BARS OF OP. 63 NO. 1
("IM VOLKSTON")

[*By permission of the Publishers,*
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THE "PEER-GYNT" MUSIC

THE music which Grieg wrote to Ibsen's drama of "Peer Gynt" is that which first made his name famous all over Europe. Not only so, but its popularity remains to-day unabated, and it is the most beloved by the public of all the master's compositions. It is the orchestral work of a master that, generally speaking, appeals to the largest number (perhaps because orchestral concerts demand the largest attendances), and therefore his achievement in this sphere become more widely known than those that flourish in the rarer atmosphere of the chamber concert or the private boudoir. In choosing a work of Grieg's for analytical description, it is believed that this particular one can be most usefully discussed in this place.

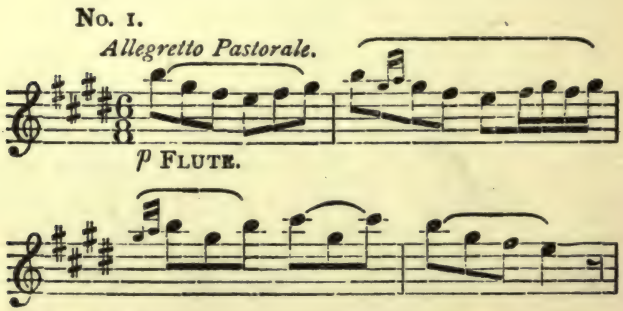
What one hears in the concert room is not the original form of the music; this was, of course, incidental to the play, the main points of which may perhaps be recalled. Peer Gynt is a rough rustic youth who imagines he can become ruler of the world; he is uncouth and violent, and is dreaded by all, especially by his

mother, Åsa. He seizes a bride, Ingrid, on her wedding day, drags her into the mountains, and then deserts her. Yet there is a maiden, Solvejg, who loves him in spite of all, and comes to the hut that he builds himself in the forest, willing to give up the whole world for him. For his misdeeds he is tortured by the gnomes and spirits of the mountains, the scene in the Hall of the Mountain King being one of the most effective in the play. He deserts Solvejg and returns to Åsa, his mother, who dies in his arms. After many wondrous adventures he meets Anitra, the daughter of a Bedouin chief, whom he loves, but who flouts him. Eventually he returns to Norway, and in the forest hut finds the dying Solvejg still faithfully awaiting him.

Much music was written for these scenes, and from them we have the well-known "Solvejg's Song" and other excerpts. Grieg, not wishing to limit the performance of his composition to the comparatively few occasions on which the drama might be produced, arranged many of the numbers into the form of two orchestral suites, of which the first is the thoroughly familiar one; it consists of four numbers, of which some analysis may now be offered, and which have these titles:

(1) "Morning-Mood."
(2) "The Death of Åsa."
(3) "Anitra's Dance."
(4) "In the Hall of the Mountain King."

"Morgenstimmung," or "Morning-Mood," is the prelude to the fourth act of the play; it is a delightful pastoral scene, with the gentle murmur of soft breezes over a distant sea and the happy carolling of birds; a musical picture of restful content and unruffled happiness. We can feel the glorious atmosphere of a perfect dawn, with all Nature joyously and harmoniously happy. The sweet idyllic tones of the flute first announce the undulating theme which serves as structural basis for the whole.

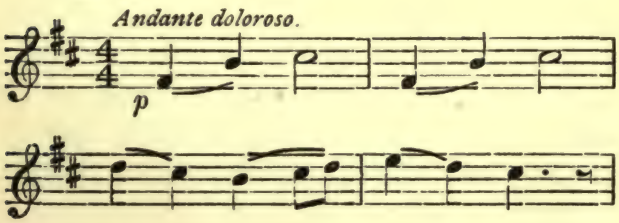


Taken up by one instrument after the other, this melody is sonorously carried on to a glow-

ing climax, all the strings playing it in octaves. Then in the 'cellos we hear a more plaintive note, a wailing theme checked by outbursts from the full orchestra; at length, beneath a softly flowing accompaniment, the chief idea (No. 1) is heard upon the horn, and we return to our mood of blissful content. With delicate trills for the flute and clarionet, and a soft mellow murmur of the horns, the music dies away into the most exquisite *pianissimo.* The whole constitutes a tone poem of a delicate fragility and beauty, perhaps unequalled by anything that Grieg penned either before or after.

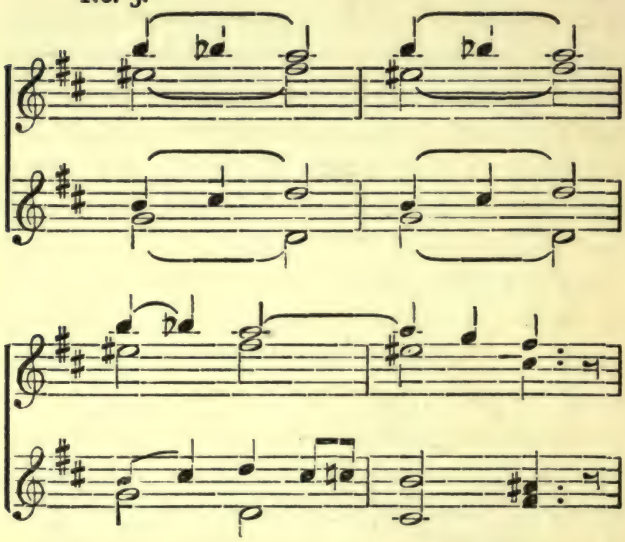
"The Death of Åsa." This is naturally sombre in tone, and offers a complete contrast to the bewitching beauty of the Prelude. It is scored for strings only, these being divided into many parts, mutes being employed to add to the general atmosphere of grief that it is designed to depict. The simple plaintive motive on which it is constructed

No. 2.



is most ingeniously varied in its different presentations, and as it proceeds we find Grieg using startling harmonies, which quite establish his claim to the position of an innovator. When hearing such chord combinations as these

No. 3.

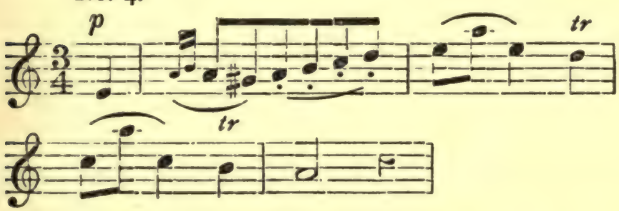


we must remember that they were written in 1874, long before the harmonies of Richard Strauss, Debussy, and Puccini had accustomed the ear to almost any possible tone-combinations. Grieg's chords are poignant in their expression of remorse, and exhibit the presence

of real original faculty in the mind from which they sprang.

"Anitra's Dance" transports us to another realm entirely. We hear the tinkle of the triangle, and the rhythm of the dance, and instantly we are in the East, with all its weird strangeness and fascinating charm. The daughter of the Bedouin chief moves before us with delicate grace and with half-simple, half-luring glance. There is a suggestion of passion which underlies the development of the *naïve* theme of the mazurka-like measure

No. 4.

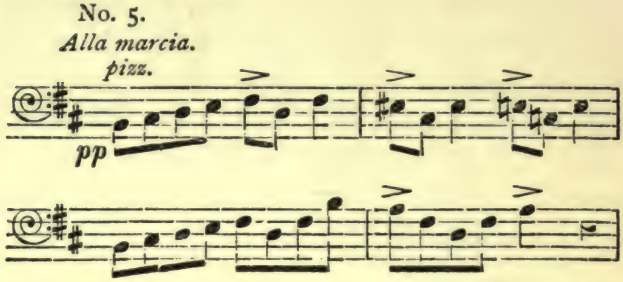


The muted violins are laughing at us; their seductive melody breaks off into a mocking little phrase of staccato notes, and the triangle with its soulless note pierces through our vain longing, sigh we never so plaintively. Ah, Peer, the daughter of the Arab chief is not for thee!

"In the Hall of the Mountain King" Peer Gynt is tortured by gibing gnomes. Grieg here

uses some skilful effects of orchestral colouring, and has most certainly heeded Ibsen's suggestion that "there should be plenty of devil in it." The weird theme, played pizzicato by the 'cellos and double-basses,

No. 5.



is accompanied and answered by two droll bassoons, and punctuated by stopped notes on the horns. From this almost inaudible beginning a long crescendo is piled up, the music always hurrying and hastening on. As more instruments are added, and the tempo quickens, the strings and wood-wind whirl busily about with exciting figures, and the climax is a shrill screech from the piccolo and higher strings, a kind of frenzy built up by skilful orchestration and clever manipulation of material.

The Second Suite, adapted some years later by Grieg from the "Peer-Gynt" music, although containing such delightful numbers as "Ingrid's

Lament," "Solvejg's Song," and "Solvejg's Cradle-Song," can perhaps hardly rank with the first, in which we have an epitome, as it were, of much that is best in Grieg. Certainly it would be difficult to find four other pieces in which one could concentrate so much of his melodic charm, delicate and graceful fancy, skilful orchestration, and versatility of idea as there is displayed in that little collection of real gems so world-beloved as the first "Peer-Gynt" Suite.

PROGRAMME

SONATA in A minor, Op. 36, for Violoncello and Pianoforte *Grieg*

(*a*) Allegro agitato.
(*b*) Andante molto tranquillo.
(*c*) Allegro marcato.

Professor HUGO BECKER and THE COMPOSER.

SONGS, accompanied by the Composer

(*a*) Det Syng (Garborg)
(*b*) Möte (Garborg)
(*c*) Ragna (Drachmann)
(*d*) Ragnhild (Drachmann) . . . *Grieg*

Sung in Norwegian and Danish

Mlle. EMMA HOLMSTRAND.

PIANOFORTE SOLOS—

(*a*) Gangar (from "Slåtter," Op. 72)
(*b*) Popular Air } from "Impressions,"
(*c*) The Mountaineer's Song } Op. 73 *Grieg*
(*d*) Wedding-day at Troldhaugen * (from Op. 65)

* The Composer's Villa near Bergen

THE COMPOSER.

SONGS, accompanied by the Composer

(*a*) Detfö ste Möde (Björnson)
(*b*) Et H (Paulsen)
(*c*) Med en Primulavéris (Paulsen)
(*d*) Tak för dit Råd (Björnson) . . *Grieg*

Sung in Norwegian

Mlle. EMMA HOLMSTRAND.

SONATA in C minor, Op. 45, for Violin and Pianoforte . *Grieg*

(*a*) Allegro appassionato.
(*b*) Alla romanza.
(*c*) Allegro animato.

M. JOHANNES WOLFF and THE COMPOSER.

PROGRAMME OF GRIEG'S LAST CONCERT IN ENGLAND
(QUEEN'S HALL, *May 24th*, 1906).

GRIEG'S WORKS

GRIEG wrote no symphonies, and only a few orchestral works of any dimension. Neither did he pen any large choral cantatas, works of oratorio type, or operas. Most of his compositions are sets of small pieces, or sets of songs.

Of orchestral works there is no great number, but in addition to the two "Peer-Gynt" Suites the set of Four Symphonic Dances and the Lyric Suite performed at Grieg's last English concert take high rank. They were favourite works with the composer, and give distinct evidence of genius. Besides these may be mentioned the concert-overture, "In Autumn," and the incidental music to Björnson's play "Sigurd Jorsalfar." For string orchestra "Two Melodies," Op. 34, Suite "In Holberg's Time," "Two Melodies," Op. 53, "Two Norwegian Melodies," Op. 63. In addition to these, many of Grieg's more popular pianoforte pieces and songs have been arranged for the orchestra by the composer himself, and by Halvorsen, Sitt, and others.

For chorus and orchestra there is a scena for

soprano and alto solo, chorus and orchestra, "At the Cloister Gate"; songs from "Sigurd Jorsalfar" for baritone, solo with male voice chorus "Recognition of Land," and a song, "Der Einsame," for baritone with small orchestra. "Olav Trygavson" (from Björnson) for solos, chorus, and orchestra, and "Bergliot," a recitation with orchestral accompaniment.

There is only one concerto, and that for pianoforte and orchestra, the famous and world-known example in A minor.

Of chamber music there is no great amount: one string quartette, three sonatas for pianoforte and violin, and one for violoncello and pianoforte.

For pianoforte alone there is one sonata (in E minor), ten books of lyric pieces, "Humoreskes," popular songs, melodies, and sketches of Norwegian life, transcriptions of songs, and a larger example of Grieg's work, a ballade in G minor. Altogether there are well over a hundred pianoforte pieces, to say nothing of arrangements. Grieg also wrote some original pianoforte duets.

There are one hundred and twenty-five songs, sixty of which are published in a set of five books or albums issued by the firm of Peters. The others are generally obtainable in sets.

Amongst Grieg's latest publications was a set of four Psalms for chorus without accompaniment.

In addition to the works as written by Grieg, numerous arrangements, many of them artistic and effective, of his pieces have been made, especially of the more popular ones. Thus, for example, the "Peer-Gynt" Suite is obtainable for pianoforte solo, duet, two pianos (both four hands and eight hands), violin and pianoforte, violoncello and pianoforte, and as a trio. All these arrangements, as well as the original form of the works, are to be had from Messrs. Peters, of Leipsig, who have always issued Grieg's compositions in cheap form as they appeared from his pen, or from their London agents, Messrs. Augener and Co., of Regent Street.

SOME BOOKS AND ARTICLES ON GRIEG

"EDVARD GRIEG," by H. T. Finck (John Lane).

Schjelderup, "Edvard Grieg og hans Vaerker" (in Norwegian, published at Copenhagen).

Closson, "Edvard Grieg et la Musique Scandinave" (Paris, Librarie Fischbacher).

Gilman, "Phases of Modern Music" (John Lane).

Grönvold, "Norske Musikere" (in Norwegian, published at Christiania).

Lindgren, "Musikaliska Studien" (in Swedish, published at Stockholm).

Very numerous magazine and newspaper articles, many of which appearing in September and October, 1907, shortly after Grieg's death, aptly survey and summarize his life's work.

The "Contemporary Review" for July, 1905, contains a translation of an article by Grieg, describing anecdotes and experiences of his school and student days.

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Lee, Ernest Markham
Grieg